

Remarks:

This amendment is submitted in an earnest effort to advance this case to issue without delay.

The claims have been revised somewhat to make their language and form somewhat clearer but are generally of the same scope as the claims from the previous amendment.

The claims were rejected basically on the admitted prior art (APA) of this application in combination with the discussion in the Background section of US '226 of Hoyt.

More specifically the APA (Substitute Specification page 2, line 17 to page 3, line 17) is that when orifices of a spinneret plate become unusable, they are closed off by plugs of graphite fired to a "ceramic" state and stable at temperatures "in excess of 1000°C." Such plugs are so very durable that they can only be removed by physical action, for instance by poking them out with a wire or drilling them out. This is the APA.

Hoyt describes (column 1, lines 27 through 44) a known system for cleaning plastic out of a spinneret involving two "burn out" treatments. There is no discussion whatsoever in Hoyt of any plugs of a material other than the plastic that is being extruded through the spinneret that have to be removed. No temperatures are given, but it is presumed the treatments are carried out a high

enough temperature to decompose plastic while not harming the metal plate being cleaned.

Hence combining the teachings of the APA from this application with Hoyt would produce a system where "ceramic" plugs stable up to 1000°C were used in the Hoyt plate and subjected to two burn-offs. This would not result in the system of this invention as defined in claim 1 because in order to burn off the ceramic plugs suggested by the APA, it would be necessary to heat the mold plate to 1000°C or more. Presuming the plate was the standard steel construction into which the extrusion orifices were machined, such heating would damage it, probably changing its temper or other critical properties and rendering it unusable. It is never obvious to do something that does not achieve the desired end: If the burn-off of Hoyt were modified to destroy the ceramic plugs of the APA the result would be a ruined die plate.

According to the amended claims the binder of the plugs is an "amorphous carbon" that, unlike the graphite of the admitted prior art can be pyrolytically decomposed at a much lower temperature than the clay/graphite ceramic of the APA. Amorphous carbon is an allotrope of carbon with no crystalline structure and is not graphite. Thus the instant invention uses a different material that allows a lower temperature to be used to destroy the plugs, a temperature that will do no harm to the steel spinneret. In other words the instant invention involves an unobvious material

selection that allows a something to be done -- pyrolitic decomposition of the plugs -- that could not be done in the prior art without damage to the surrounding workpiece.

There is nothing in the art to suggest making spinneret-orifice plugs with an amorphous-carbon binder so they can be destroyed pyrolitically without damage to the adjacent metal. Instead the art suggests using ceramic plugs that cannot be destroyed pyrolitically. The invention as defined in amended claim 21 is therefore allowable over the art under §103.

If only minor problems that could be corrected by means of a telephone conference stand in the way of allowance of this case, the examiner is invited to call the undersigned to make the necessary corrections.

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